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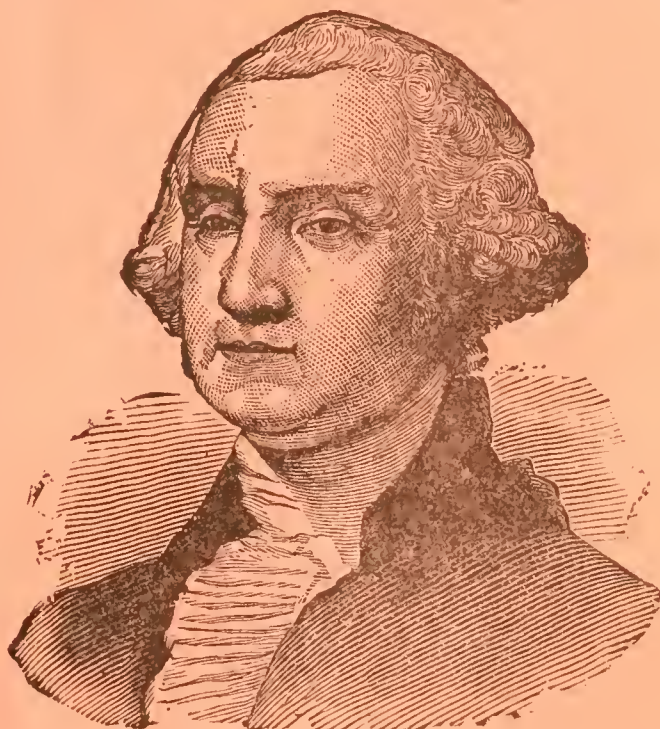
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THE CENTENNIAL ORATION

DELIVERED BY

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW

*On the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Inauguration of
George Washington as President of the United States.*



1789.

1889.

ALSO THE POEM

"THE VOW OF WASHINGTON,"

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

J. S. OGILVIE, PUBLISHER, 57 Rose St., New York; 182 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

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THE CENTENNIAL ORATION

DELIVERED BY

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW

*In front of the Sub-Treasury Building, Wall Street,
New York,*

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 1889,

ON THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INAUGURATION OF GEORGE
WASHINGTON AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

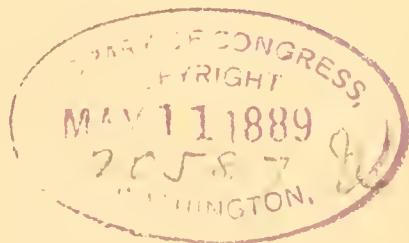
ALSO THE POEM

"The Vow of Washington,"

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER,

Which was Read at the same time.

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MR. DEPEW'S ORATION.

He Reviews the History of the Revolution and
Tells the Meaning of the Centennial Celebration.

MR. DEPEW wore a black skull-cap, spectacles, a tightly-buttoned Prince-Albert coat, striped trousers and patent-leather shoes. His oratory was of a finished and graceful sort, and the theme had inspired him to the production of a literary masterpiece. He was imposing, and swayed the crowd within reach of his voice by his well-turned sentences and the thousands who could not hear by his gestures. The oration was as follows :

We celebrate to-day the centenary of our nationality. One hundred years ago the United States began their existence. The powers of government were assumed by the people of the Republic, and they became the sole source of

authority. The solemn ceremonial of the first inauguration, the reverent oath of Washington, the acclaim of the multitude greeting their President, marked the most unique event of modern times in the development of free institutions.

The occasion was not an accident, but a result. It was the culmination of the working out by mighty forces through many centuries of the problem of self-government. It was not the triumph of a system, the application of a theory, or the reduction to practice of the abstractions of philosophy. The time, the country, the heredity and environment of the people, the folly of its enemies and the noble courage of its friends gave to liberty after ages of defeat, of trial, of experiment, of partial success and substantial gains this immortal victory.

Henceforth it had a refuge and recruiting-station. The oppressed found free homes in this favored land, and invisible armies marched from it by mail and telegraph, by speech and song, by precept and example, to regenerate the world.

Puritans in New England, Dutchmen in New York, Catholics in Maryland, Huguenots in South Carolina had felt the fires of persecution

and were wedded to religious liberty. They had been purified in the furnace, and in high debate and on bloody battlefields had learned to sacrifice all material interests and to peril their lives for human rights. The principles of constitutional government had been impressed upon them by hundreds of years of struggle, and for each principle they could point to the grave of an ancestor whose death attested the ferocity of the fight and the value of the concession wrung from arbitrary power.

THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE.

They knew the limitations of authority, they could pledge their lives and fortunes to resist encroachments upon their rights, but it required the lesson of Indian massacres, the invasion of the armies of France from Canada, the tyranny of the British Crown, the seven years' war of the Revolution, and the five years of chaos of the Confederation to evolve the idea, upon which rest the power and permanency of the Republic, that liberty and union are one and inseparable.

The traditions and experience of the colonists had made them alert to discover and quick to

resist any peril to their liberties. Above all things they feared and distrusted power. The town-meeting and the Colonial Legislature gave them confidence in themselves and courage to check the royal governors. Their interests, hopes and affections were in their several commonwealths, and each blow by the British Ministry at their freedom, each attack upon their rights as Englishmen, weakened their love for the mother-land and intensified their hostility to the Crown.

But the same causes which broke down their allegiance to the central government increased their confidence in their respective colonies, and their faith in liberty was largely dependent upon the maintenance of the sovereignty of their several States. The farmers' shot at Lexington echoed round the world; the spirit which it awakened from its slumbers could do and dare and die, but it had not yet discovered the secret of the permanence and progress of free institutions.

Patrick Henry thundered in the Virginia Convention, James Otis spoke with trumpet tongue and fervid eloquence for united action in Massachusetts; Hamilton, Jay and Clinton pledged New York to respond with men and

money for the common cause, but their vision only saw a league of independent colonies. The veil was not yet drawn from before the vista of population and power, of empire and liberty, which would open with national union.

THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

The Continental Congress partially grasped, but completely expressed, the central idea of the American Republic. More fully than any other body which ever assembled did it represent the victories won from arbitrary power for human rights. In the new world it was the conservator of liberties secured through centuries of struggle in the old. Among the delegates were the descendants of the men who had stood in that brilliant array upon the field of Runymede, which wrested from King John Magna Charta, that great charter of liberty, to which Hallam in the nineteenth century bears witness "that all which had been since obtained is little more than as confirmation or commentary."

There were the grandchildren of the statesmen who had summoned Charles before Parliament and compelled his assent to the petition

of rights, which transferred power from the crown to the Commons and gave representative government to the English speaking race. And there were those who had sprung from the iron soldiers who had fought and charged with Cromwell at Naseby and Dunbar and Marston Moor. Among its members were Huguenots, whose fathers had followed the white plume of Henry of Navarre, and in an age of bigotry, intolerance and the deification of absolutism, had secured the great edict of religious liberty from French despotism ; and who had become a people without a country, rather than surrender their convictions and forswear their consciences.

In this Congress were those whose ancestors were the countrymen of William of Orange, the Beggars of the Sea, who had survived the cruelties of Alva and broken the yoke of proud Philip of Spain, and who had two centuries before made a declaration of independence and formed a federal union which were models of freedom and strength.

These men were not revolutionists, they were the heirs and the guardians of the priceless treasures of mankind. The British king and his Ministers were the revolutionists. They

were reactionaries, seeking arbitrarily to turn back the hands upon the dial of time. A year of doubt and debate, the baptism of blood upon battlefields, where soldiers from every colony fought under a common standard and consolidated the Continental army, gradually lifted the soul and understanding of this immortal Congress to the sublime declaration :

“ We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.”

OUR FIRST BRAVE MEN.

To this declaration John Hancock, proscribed and threatened with death, affixed a signature which has stood for a century like the pointers to the North Star in the firmament of freedom, and Charles Carroll, taunted that among many Carrolls he, the richest man in America, might escape, added description and identification

with "of Carrollton." Benjamin Harrison, a delegate from Virginia, the ancestor of the distinguished statesman and soldier who to-day so worthily fills the chair of Washington, voiced the unalterable determination and defiance of the Congress. He seized John Hancock, upon whose head a price was set, in his arms, and, placing him in the presidential chair, said :

"We will show Mother Britain how little we care for her by making our President a Massachusetts man, whom she has excluded from pardon by public proclamation ;" and when they were signing the Declaration, and the slender Elbridge Gerry uttered the grim pleasantry, "We must hang together or surely we will hang separately," the portly Harrison responded with the more daring humor, "It will be all over with me in a moment, but you will be kicking in the air half an hour after I am gone."

Thus flashed athwart the great Charter, which was to be for its signers a death warrant or a diploma of immortality, as with firm hand, high purpose, and undaunted resolution they subscribed their names, this mockery of fear and the penalties of treason.

The grand central idea of the Declaration of Independence was the sovereignty of the people.

It relied for original power, not upon States or colonies, or their citizens as such, but recognized as the authority for nationality the revolutionary rights of the people of the United States. It stated with marvelous clearness the encroachments upon liberties which threatened their suppression and justified revolt, but it was inspired by the very genius of freedom, and the prophetic possibilities of united commonwealths covering the continent in one harmonious republic, when it made the people of the thirteen colonies all Americans and devolved upon them to administer by themselves and for themselves the prerogatives and powers wrested from Crown and Parliament.

It condensed Magna Charta, the petition of rights, the great body of English liberties embodied in the common law and accumulated in the decision of the courts, the statutes of the realm, and an undisputed though unwritten constitution; but this original principle and dynamite force of the people's power sprang from these old seeds planted in the virgin soil of the new world.

JEFFERSON'S FAITH IN THE PEOPLE.

More clearly than any statesman of the period did Thomas Jefferson grasp and divine possibilities of popular government. He caught and crystallized the spirit of free institutions. His philosophical mind was singularly free from the power of precedents or the chains of prejudice. He had an unquestioning and abiding faith in the people, which was accepted by but few of his compatriots. Upon his famous axiom, of the equality of all men before the law, he constructed his system.

It was the triphammer essential for the emergency to break the links binding the Colonies to imperial authority, and to pulverize the privileges of caste. It inspired him to write the Declaration of Independence, and persuaded him to doubt the wisdom of the powers concentrated in the Constitution. In his passionate love of liberty he became intensely jealous of authority. He destroyed the substance of royal prerogative, but never emerged from its shadow. He would have the States as the guardians of popular rights, and the barriers against centralization ; and he

saw in the growing power of the nation ever increasing encroachments upon the rights of the people.

For the success of the pure democracy which must precede Presidents and Cabinets and Congresses, it was perhaps providential that its apostle never believed a great people could grant and still retain, could give and at will reclaim, could delegate and yet firmly hold the authority which ultimately created the power of their republic and enlarged the scope of their own liberty.

Where this master mind halted all stood still. The necessity for a permanent union was apparent, but each State must have hold upon the bowstring which encircled its throat. It was admitted that union gave the machinery required to successfully fight the common enemy, but yet there was fear that it might become a Frankenstein and destroy its creators.

Thus patriotism and fear, difficulties of communication between distant communities, and the intense growth of provincial pride and interest, led this Congress to frame the Articles of Confederation, happily termed the League of Friendship. The result was not a government, but a ghost. By this scheme the Amer-

ican people were ignored and the Declaration of Independence reversed. The States, by their Legislatures, elected delegates to Congress, and the delegate represented the sovereignty of his commonwealth.

All the States had an equal voice without regard to their size or population. It required the vote of nine States to pass any bill, and five could block the wheels of government. Congress had none of the powers essential to sovereignty. It could neither levy taxes nor impose duties nor collect excise. For the support of the army and navy, for the purposes of war, for the preservation of its own functions, it could only call upon the States, but it possessed no power to enforce its demands. It had no president or executive authority, no Supreme Court with general jurisdiction and no national power. Each of the thirteen States had seaports and levied discriminating duties against the others, and could also tax and thus prohibit interstate commerce across its territory.

HOW FREEDOM WAS GAINED.

Had the Confederation been a union instead of a league, it could have raised and equipped three times the number of men contributed by reluctant States, and conquered independence without foreign assistance. This paralyzed government, without strength, because it could not only enforce its decrees; without credit, because it could pledge nothing for the payment of its debts; without respect, because without inherent authority; would, by its feeble life and early death, have added to the other historic tragedies which have in many lands marked the suppression of freedom, had it not been saved by the intelligent, inherited and invincible understanding of liberty by the people, and the genius and patriotism of their leaders.

But, while the perils of war had given temporary strength to the Confederation, peace developed its fatal weakness. It derived no authority from the people, and could not appeal to them. Anarchy threatened its existence at home, and contempt met its representatives abroad.

“Can you fulfill or enforce the obligations of the treaty on your part if we sign one with you?” was the sneer of the courts of the old world to our ambassadors. Some States gave a half-hearted support to its demands; others defied them. The loss of public credit was speedily followed by universal bankruptcy. The wildest fantasies assumed the force of serious measures for the relief of the general distress. States passed exclusive and hostile laws against each other, and riot and disorder threatened the disintegration of society.

“Our stock is stolen, our houses are plundered, our farms are raided,” cried a delegate in the Massachusetts convention; “despotism is better than anarchy!” To raise \$4,000,000 a year was beyond the resources of the government, and \$300,000 was the limit of the loan it could secure from the money lenders of Europe. Even Washington exclaimed in despair:

“I see one head gradually changing into thirteen; I see one army gradually branching into thirteen, which, instead of looking up to Congress as the supreme controlling power, are considering themselves as depending on their respective States.” And later, when independence had been won, the impotency of the gov-

ernment wrung from him the exclamation :
“ After gloriously and successfully contending
against the usurpation of Great Britain, we
may fall a prey to our own folly and disputes.”

THE ARCHITECTS OF FREEDOM.

But even through this Cimmerian darkness
shot a flame which illumined the coming cent-
ury, and kept bright the beacon-fires of liberty.
The architects of constitutional freedom formed
their institutions with wisdom which forecasted
the future. They may not have understood at
first the whole truth, but, for that which they
knew, they had the martyrs' spirit and the cru-
saders' enthusiasm.

Though the confederation was a government
of checks without balances, and of purpose
without power, the statesmen who guided it
demonstrated often the resistless force of great
souls animated by the purest patriotism, and
united in judgment and effort to promote the
common good, by lofty appeals and high reason-
ing, to elevate the masses above local greed
and apparent self-interest to their own broad
plane.

The most significant triumph of these moral

and intellectual forces was that which secured the assent of the States to the limitation of their boundaries, to the grant of the wilderness beyond them to the general government and to the insertion in the ordinance erecting the Northwest Territories, of the immortal *proviso* prohibiting "slavery or involuntary servitude" within all that broad domain. The States carved out of this splendid concession were not sovereignties which had successfully rebelled, but they were the children of the Union, born of the covenant and thrilled with its life and liberty. They became the bulwarks of nationality and the buttresses of freedom. Their prepondering strength first checked and then broke the slave power, their fervid loyalty halted and held at bay the spirit of State rights and secession for generations; and when the crisis came, it was with their overwhelming assistance that the nation killed and buried its enemy.

The corner-stone of the edifice whose centenary we are celebrating was the ordinance of 1787. It was constructed by the feeblest of Congresses, but few enactments of ancient or modern times have had more far-reaching and beneficent influence. It is one of the sub-

limest paradoxes of history that this weak Confederation of States should have welded the chain against which, after seventy-four years of fretful efforts for release, its own spirit frantically dashed and died.

The government of the Republic by a Congress of States, a diplomatic convention of the ambassadors of petty commonwealths, after seven years' trial, was falling asunder. Threatened with civil war among its members, insurrection and lawlessness rife within the States, foreign commerce ruined and internal trade paralyzed, its currency worthless, its merchants bankrupt, its farms mortgaged, its markets closed, its labor unemployed, it was like a helpless wreck upon the ocean, tossed about by the tides and ready to be engulfed in the storm.

UPRISING OF PATRIOTISM.

Washington gave the warning and called for action. It was a voice accustomed to command, but now entreating. The veterans of the war and the statesmen of the Revolution stepped to the front. The patriotism which had been misled, but had never faltered, rose above the interests of States and the jealousies

of jarring confederates to find the basis for union.

“It is clear to me as A, B, C,” said Washington, “that an extension of federal powers would make us one of the most happy, wealthy, respectable and powerful nations that ever inhabited the terrestrial globe. Without them we shall be everything which is the direct reverse. I predict the worst consequences from a half-starved, limping government, always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step.”

The response of the country was the convention of 1787, at Philadelphia. The Declaration of Independence was but the vestibule of the temple which this illustrious assembly erected. With no successful precedents to guide, it auspiciously worked out the problem of constitutional government, and of imperial power and home rule, supplementing each other in promoting the grandeur of the nation, and preserving the liberty of the individual.

The deliberations of great councils have vitally affected, at different periods, the history of the world and the fate of empires; but this Congress builded, upon popular sovereignty, institutions broad enough to embrace the con-

continent, and elastic enough to fit all conditions of race and traditions. The experience of a hundred years has demonstrated for us the perfection of the work, for defence against foreign foes, and for self-preservation against domestic insurrection, for limitless expansion in population and material development, and for steady growth in intellectual freedom and force. Its continuing influence upon the welfare and destiny of the human race can only be measured by the capacity of man to cultivate and enjoy the boundless opportunities of liberty and law. The eloquent characterization of Mr. Gladstone condenses its merits: "The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."

The statesmen who composed this great Senate were equal to their trust. Their conclusions were the results of calm debate and wise concession. Their character and abilities were so pure and great as to command the confidence of the country for the reversal of the policy of the independence of the State of the power of the general government, which had hitherto been the invariable practice and almost

universal opinion, and for the adoption of the idea of the nation and its supremacy.

WASHINGTON'S CHIEF ADVISERS.

Towering in majesty and influence above them all stood Washington, their President. Beside him was the venerable Franklin, who, though 81 years of age, brought to the deliberations of the convention the unimpaired vigor and resources of the wisest brain, the most hopeful philosophy and the largest experience of the times; Oliver Ellsworth, afterward Chief Justice of the United States and the profoundest jurist in the country; Robert Morris, the wonderful financier of the Revolution, and Gouverneur Morris, the most versatile genius of his period; Roger Sherman, one of the most eminent of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and John Rutledge, Rufus King, Elbridge Gerry, Edmund Randolph and the Pinckneys, were leaders of unequalled patriotism, courage, ability, and learning; while Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, as original thinkers and constructive statesmen, rank among the immortal few whose

opinions have for ages guided Ministers of State and determined the destinies of nations.

This great convention keenly felt, and with devout and serene intelligence met, its tremendous responsibilities. It had the moral support of the few whose aspirations for liberty had been inspired or renewed by the triumph of the American Revolution and the active hostility of every government in the world.

There were no examples to follow, and the experience of its members led part of them to lean toward absolute centralization as the only refuge from the anarchy of the Confederation, while the rest clung to the sovereignty of the States, for fear that the concentration of power would end in the absorption of liberty. The large States did not want to surrender the advantage of their position, and the smaller States saw the danger to their existence. The leagues of the Greek cities had ended in loss of freedom, tyranny, conquest and destruction. Roman conquest and assimilation had strewn the shores of time with the wrecks of empires, and plunged civilization into the perils and horrors of the dark ages. The government of Cromwell was the isolated power of the mightiest man of his age, without popular

authority to fill his place or the hereditary principle to protect his successor. The past furnished no light for our State builders; the present was full of doubt and despair. The future, the experiment of self-government, the perpetuity and development of freedom, almost the destiny of mankind, was in their hands.

SUPREME FORCE AND MAJESTIC SENSE.

At this crisis the courage and confidence needed to originate a system weakened. The temporizing spirit of compromise seized the convention with the alluring proposition of not proceeding faster than the people could be educated to follow. The cry: "Let us not waste our labor upon conclusions which will not be adopted, but amend and adjourn," was assuming startling unanimity. But the supreme force and majestic sense of Washington brought the assemblage to the lofty plane of its duty and opportunity. He said:

"It is too probable that no plan we propose will be adopted. Perhaps another dreadful conflict is to be sustained. If to please the people we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterward defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the event is in the hands of God." "I

am the State," said Louis XIV., but his line ended in the grave of absolutism. "Forty centuries look down upon you," was Napoleon's address to his army in the shadow of the Pyramids, but his soldiers saw only the dream of Eastern empire vanish in blood. Statesmen and parliamentary leaders have sunk into oblivion or led their party to defeat by surrendering their convictions to the passing passions of the hour, but Washington in this immortal speech struck the keynote of representative obligation and propounded the fundamental principle of the purity and perpetuity of constitutional government.

Freed from the limitations of its environment, and the question of the adoption of its work, the convention erected its government upon the eternal foundations of the power of the people. It dismissed the delusive theory of a compact between independent States, and derived national power from the people of the United States. It broke up the machinery of the Confederation and put in practical operation the glittering generalities of the Declaration of Independence. From chaos came order, from insecurity came safety, from disintegration and civil war came law and liberty, with the prin-

ciple proclaimed in the preamble of the great charter, "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States."

WISDOM INSPIRED BY GOD.

With a wisdom inspired of God, to work out upon this continent the liberty of man, they solved the problem of the ages by blending and yet preserving local self-government with national authority, and the rights of the States with the majesty and power of the Republic. The government of the States, under the Articles of Confederation, became bankrupt because it could not raise four millions of dollars; the government of the Union, under the Constitution of the United States, raised six thousand millions of dollars, its credit growing firmer as its power and resources were demonstrated. The Congress of the Confederation fled from a regiment, which it could not pay; the Congress of the Union

reviewed the comrades of a million of its victorious soldiers, saluting as they marched the flag of the nation, whose supremacy they had sustained. The promises of the Confederacy were the scoff of its States ; the pledge of the Republic was the honor of its people.

The Constitution, which was to be strengthened by the strain of a century, to be a mighty conqueror without a subject province, to triumphantly survive the greatest of civil wars without the confiscation of an estate or the execution of a political offender, to create and grant home rule and State sovereignty to twenty-nine additional commonwealths, and yet enlarge its scope and broaden its power, and to make the name of an American citizen a title of honor throughout the world, came complete from this great convention to the people for adoption.

As Hancock rose from his seat in the old Congress, eleven years before, to sign the Declaration of Independence, Franklin saw emblazoned on the back of the President's chair the sun partly above the horizon, but it seemed setting in a blood-red sky. During the seven years of the Confederation he had gathered no hope from the glittering emblem,

but now as with clear vision he beheld fixed upon eternal foundations the enduring structure of constitutional liberty, pointing to the sign, he forgot his 82 years, and with the enthusiasm of youth electrified the convention with the declaration : " Now I know that it is the rising sun."

The pride of the States and the ambition of their leaders, sectional jealousies, and the overwhelming distrust of centralized power, were all arrayed against the adoption of the Constitution. North Carolina and Rhode Island refused to join the Union until long after Washington's inauguration. For months New York was debatable ground. Her territory extending from the sea to the lakes made her the keystone of the arch. Had Arnold's treason in the Revolution not been foiled by the capture of Andre, England would have held New York and subjugated the colonies, and in this crisis, unless New York assented, a hostile and powerful commonwealth dividing the States, made the Union impossible.

CAUSES OF SUCCESS.

Success was due to confidence in Washington and the genius of Alexander Hamilton. Jefferson was the inspiration of independence, but Hamilton was the incarnation of the Constitution. In no age or country has there appeared a more precocious or amazing intelligence than Hamilton. At 17 he annihilated the president of his college, upon the question of the rights of the Colonies, in a series of anonymous articles which were credited to the ablest men in the country ; at 47, when he died, his briefs had become the law of the land, and his fiscal system was, and after a hundred years remains, the rule and policy of our government.

He gave life to the corpse of national credit, and the strength for self-preservation and aggressive power to the federal Union. Both as an expounder of the principles and an administrator of the affairs of government he stands supreme and unrivalled in American history. His eloquence was so magnetic, his language so clear, and his reasoning so irresistible, that he swayed with equal ease popular assemblies,

grave senates, and learned judges. He captured the people of the whole country for the Constitution by his papers in the *Federalist*, and conquered the hostile majority in the New York convention by the splendor of his oratory.

But the multitudes whom no argument could convince, who saw in the executive power and centralized force of the Constitution, under another name, and dreaded usurpation of king and Ministry, were satisfied only with the assurance, "Washington will be President." "Good!" cried John Lamb, the able leader of the Sons of Liberty, as he dropped his opposition "for to no other mortal would I trust authority so enormous."

"Washington will be President," was the battle cry of the Constitution. It quieted alarm and gave confidence to the timid and courage to the weak. The country responded with enthusiastic unanimity, but the chief with the greatest reluctance. In the supreme moment of victory when the world expected him to follow the precedents of the past, and perpetuate the power a grateful country would willingly have left in his hands, he had resigned and retired to Mt. Vernon to enjoy in private station his well-earned rest.

The convention created by his exertions to prevent, as he said, "the decline of our federal dignity into insignificant and wretched fragments of empire," had called him to preside over its deliberations. Its work made possible the realization of his hope that "we might survive as an independent republic," and again he sought the seclusion of his home. But, after the triumph of the war and the formation of the Constitution, came the third and final crisis—the initial movements of government which were to teach the infant State the steadier steps of empire.

WASHINGTON'S MODESTY.

He alone could stay assault and inspire confidence while the great and complicated machinery of organized government was put in order and set in motion. Doubt existed nowhere except in his modest and unambitious heart. "My movements to the chair of government," he said, "will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution. So unwilling am I, in the evening of life, nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of

difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination which are necessary to manage the helm."

His whole life had been spent in repeated sacrifices for his country's welfare, and he did not hesitate now, though there is an undertone of inexpressible sadness in this entry in his diary on the night of his departure. "About 10 o'clock I bade adieu to Mt. Vernon, to private life and to domestic felicity, and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

No conqueror was ever accorded such a triumph, no ruler ever received such a welcome. In this memorable march of six days to the capital, it was the pride of States to accompany him with the masses of their people to their borders, that the citizens of the next commonwealth might escort him through its territory. It was the glory of cities to receive him with every civic honor at their gates, and entertain him as the savior of their liberties. He rode under triumphal arches from which children

lowered laurel wreaths upon his brow. The roadways were strewn with flowers, and as they were crushed beneath his horse's hoofs, their sweet incense wafted to heaven the ever ascending prayers of his loving countrymen for his life and safety. The swelling anthem of gratitude and reverence greeted and followed him along the country side and through the crowded streets: "Long live George Washington! Long live the father of his people!"

HIS RECEPTION IN NEW YORK.

His entry into New York was worthy of the city and State. He was met by the chief officers of the retiring government of the country, by the Governor of the Commonwealth, and the whole population. This superb harbor was alive with fleets and flags, and the ships of other nations with salutes from their guns and the cheers of their crews added to the joyous acclaim. But as the captains who had asked the privilege, bending proudly to their oars, rowed the President's barge swiftly through these inspiring scenes, Washington's mind and heart were full of reminiscence and foreboding.

He had visited New York thirty-three years

before, also in the month of April, in the full perfection of his early manhood, fresh from Braddock's bloody field, and wearing the only laurels of the battle, bearing the prophetic blessing of the venerable President Davies of Princeton College, as: "That heroic youth, Colonel Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner for some important service to the country." It was a fair daughter of our State whose smiles allured him here, and whose coy confession that her heart was another's recorded his only failure, and saddened his departure.

Twenty years passed, and he stood before the New York Congress, on this very spot, the unanimously chosen commander in chief of the Continental army, urging the people to more vigorous measures, and made painfully aware of the increased desperation of the struggle from the aid to be given to the enemy by domestic sympathizers, when he knew that the same local military company which escorted him was to perform the like service for the British Governor Tryon on his landing on the morrow.

Returning for the defence of the city the next summer he executed the retreat from Long

Island, which secured from Frederick the Great the opinion that a great commander had appeared, and at Harlem Heights he won the first American victory of the Revolution, which gave that confidence to our raw recruits against the famous veterans of Europe which carried our army triumphantly through the war. Six years more of untold sufferings, of freezing and starving camps, of marches over the snow by bare-footed soldiers to heroic attack and splendid victory, of despair with an unpaid army and of hope from the generous assistance of France, and peace had come and independence triumphed.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

As the last soldier of the invading enemy embarks, Washington at the head of the patriot host enters the city, receives the welcome and gratitude of its people, and in the tavern which faces us across the way, in silence more eloquent than speech, and with tears which choke the words, he bids farewell forever to his companions in arms. Such were the crowding memories of the past suggested to Washington in 1789 by his approach to New York. But

the future had none of the splendor of precedent and brilliance of promise which have since attended the inauguration of our Presidents.

An untried scheme, adopted mainly because its administration was to be confided to him, was to be put in practice. He knew he was to be met at every step of constitutional progress by factions temporarily hushed into unanimity by the terrific farce of the tidal wave which was bearing him to the President's seat, but fiercely hostile upon questions affecting every power of nationality and the existence of the federal government.

Washington was never dramatic, but on great occasions he not only rose to the full ideal of the event, he became himself the event. One hundred years ago to-day the procession of foreign ambassadors, of statesmen and generals, of civic societies and military companies, which escorted him, marched from Franklin square to Pearl street, through Pearl to Broad, and up Broad to this spot, but the people saw only Washington. As he stood upon the steps of the old Government building here the thought must have occurred to him that it was a cradle

of liberty, and as such giving a bright omen for the future.

In these halls in 1735, in the trial of John Zenger, had been established for the first time in its history the liberty of the press. Here the New York Assembly, in 1764, made the protest against the Stamp act and proposed the general conference, which was the beginning of the united colonial action. In this old State House in 1765 the Stamp Act Congress, the first and the father of American Congresses, assembled and presented to the English Government that vigorous protest which caused the repeal of the act and checked the first step toward the usurpation which lost the American Colonies to the British Empire. Within these walls the Congress of the Confederation had commissioned its ambassadors abroad, and in ineffectual efforts at government had created the necessity for the concentration of federal authority, now to be consummated.

WASHINGTON TAKING THE OATH.

The first Congress of the United States gathered in this ancient temple of liberty, greeted Washington and accompanied him to

the balcony. The famous men visible about him were Chancellor Livingston, Vice-President John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Governor Clinton, Roger Sherman, Richard Henry Lee, General Knox, and Baron Steuben. But we believe that among the invincible host above him, at this supreme moment of the culmination in permanent triumph of the thousands of years of struggle for self-government, were the spirits of the soldiers of the revolution who had died that their countrymen might enjoy this blessed day, and with them were the barons of Runymede and William the Silent, and Sydney and Russell, and Cromwell and Hampden, and the heroes and martyrs of liberty of every race and age.

As he came forward the multitude in the streets, in the windows and on the roofs sent up such a rapturous shout that Washington sat down overcome with emotion. As he slowly rose and his tall and majestic form again appeared the people, deeply affected, in awed silence viewed the scene. The Chancellor solemnly read to him the oath of office and Washington, repeating, said: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to

the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." Then he reverently bent low and kissed the Bible, uttering with profound emotion, "So help me God." The Chancellor waived his robes and shouted: "It is done; long live George Washington, President of the United States!"

"Long live George Washington, our first President!" was the answering cheer of the people, and from the belfries rang the bells, and from forts and ships thundered the cannon, echoing and repeating the cry with responding acclaim all over the land, "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!"

The simple and imposing ceremony over, the inaugural read, the blessing of God prayerfully petitioned in old St. Paul's, the festivities passed, and Washington stood alone. No one else could take the helm of State, and enthusiast and doubter alike trusted only him. The teachings and habits of the past had educated the people to faith in the independence of their States, and for the supreme authority of the new government there stood against the precedent of a century and the passions of the hour little besides the arguments of Hamilton, Madi-

son and Jay in the *Federalist* and the judgment of Washington.

TRIUMPH OF THE REPUBLIC.

With the first attempt to exercise national power began the duel to the death between State sovereignty claiming the right to nullify federal laws or secede from the Union, and the power of the republic to command the resources of the country, to enforce its authority and protect its life. It was the beginning of the sixty years' war for the Constitution of the nation. It seared consciences, degraded politics, destroyed parties, ruined statesmen, and retarded the advance and development of the country ; it sacrificed hundreds of thousands of precious lives, and squandered thousands of millions of money ; it desolated the fairest portion of the land and carried mourning into every home North and South ; but it ended at Appomattox in the absolute triumph of the republic.

Posterity owes to Washington's administration the policy and measures, the force and direction which made possible this glorious result. In giving the organization of the De-

partment of State and foreign relations to Jefferson, the Treasury to Hamilton and the Supreme Court to Jay he selected for his Cabinet and called to his assistance the ablest and most eminent men of his time. Hamilton's marvelous versatility and genius designed the armory and the weapons for the promotion of national power and greatness, but Washington's steady support carried them through.

Parties crystalized, and party passions were intense, debates were intemperate, and the Union openly threatened and secretly plotted against, as the firm pressure of this mighty personality funded the debt and established credit, assumed the State debts incurred in the war of the Revolution and superseded the local by the national obligation, imposed duties upon imports and excise upon spirits and created revenue and resources, organized a national banking system for public needs and private business and called out an army to put down by force of arms resistance to the federal laws imposing unpopular taxes.

Upon the plan marked out by the Constitution this great architect, with unfailing faith and unfaltering courage, builded the republic. He gave to the government the prin-

ciples of action and sources of power which carried it successfully through the wars with Great Britain in 1812 and Mexico in 1848, which enabled Jackson to defeat nullification, and recruited and equipped millions of men for Lincoln and justified and sustained his proclamation of emancipation.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

The French revolution was the bloody reality of France and the nightmare of the civilized world. The tyranny of centuries culminated in frightful reprisals and reckless revenges. As parties rose to power and passed to the guillotine, the frenzy of the revolt against all authority reached every country, and captured the imaginations and enthusiasm of millions in every land, who believed that they saw that the madness of anarchy, the overturning of all institutions, the confiscation and distribution of property, would end in a millennium for the masses and the universal brotherhood of man.

Enthusiasm for France, our late ally, and the terrible commercial and industrial distress occasioned by the failure of the government under the Articles of Confederation, aroused an

almost unanimous cry for the young republic, not yet sure of its own existence, to plunge into the vortex. The ablest and purest statesmen of the time bent to the storm, but Washington was unmoved. He stood like the rock-ribbed coast of a continent between the surging billows of fanaticism and the child of his love. Order is Heaven's first law, and the mind of Washington was order.

The revolution defied God and derided the law. Washington devoutly revered the Deity and believed liberty impossible without law. He spoke to the sober judgment of the nation and made clear the danger. He saved the infant government from ruin, and expelled the French Minister who had appealed from him to the people. The whole land seeing safety only in his continuance in office, joined Jefferson in urging him to accept a second term. "North and South," pleaded the Secretary, "will hang together while they have you to hang to."

No man ever stood for so much to his country and mankind as George Washington. Hamilton, Jefferson and Adams, Madison and Jay, each represented some of the elements which formed the Union. Washington em-

bodied them all. They fell at times under popular disapproval, were burned in effigy, were stoned, but he with unerring judgment was always the leader of the people. Milton said of Cromwell that "war made him great, peace greater."

SUPERIORITY OF WASHINGTON'S CHARACTER.

The superiority of Washington's character and genius were more conspicuous in the formation of our government and in putting it on indestructible foundations than in leading armies to victory and conquering the independence of his country. "The Union in any event" is the central thought of his farewell address, and all the years of his grand life were devoted to its formation and preservation. He fought as a youth with Braddock and in the capture of Fort Du Quesne for the protection of the whole country. As commander in chief of the Continental army his commission was from the Congress of the United Colonies. He inspired the movement for the republic, was the president and dominant spirit of the convention which framed its Constitution and its President for eight years, and guided its course until satisfied

that, moving safely along the broad highway of time, it would be surely ascending toward the first place among the nations of the world, the asylum of the oppressed, the home of the free.

Do his countrymen exaggerate his virtues? Listen to Guizot, the historian of civilization : " Washington did the two greatest things which in politics it is permitted to man to attempt. He maintained by peace the independence of his country which he conquered by war. He founded a free government in the name of the principles of order and by re-establishing their sway."

Hear Lord Erskine, the most famous of English advocates : " You are the only being for whom I have an awful reverence." Remember the tribute of Charles James Fox, the greatest Parliamentary orator who ever swayed the British House of Commons : " Illustrious man, before whom all borrowed greatness sinks into insignificance." Contemplate the character of Lord Brougham, pre-eminent for two generations in every department of human activity and thought, and then impress upon the memories of your children his deliberate judgment : " Until time shall be no more will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom

and virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of Washington."

HOW HE COMPARED WITH OTHER GENERALS.

Chatham, who, with Clive, conquered an empire in the East, died broken-hearted at the loss of the empire in the West, by follies which even his power and eloquence could not prevent. Pitt saw the vast creations of his diplomacy shattered at Austerlitz, and fell murmuring: "My country! How I leave my country!" Napoleon caused a noble tribute to Washington to be read at the head of his armies, but, unable to rise to Washington's greatness, witnessed the vast structure erected by conquest and cemented by blood, to minister to his own ambition and pride, crumble into fragments, and an exile and a prisoner he breathed his last babbling of battlefields and carnage. Washington with his finger upon his pulse, felt the presence of death, and calmly reviewing the past and forecasting the future, answered to the summons of the grim messenger, "It is well," and as his mighty soul ascended to God, the land was deluged with tears and the world united in his eulogy. Blot out from the page of history the

names of all the great actors of his time in the drama of nations, and preserve the name of Washington, and the century would be renowned.

We stand to-day upon the dividing line between the first and second centuries of constitutional government. There are no clouds overhead and no convulsions under our feet. We reverently return thanks to Almighty God for the past, and with confident and hopeful promise march upon sure ground toward the future. The simple facts of these hundred years paralyze the imagination, and we contemplate the vast accumulations of the century with awe and pride. Our population has grown from 4,000,000 to 65,000,000. Its center moving westward 500 miles since 1789 is eloquent with the foundling of cities and the birth of States. New settlements, clearing the forests and subduing the prairies, and adding 4,000,000 to the few thousands of farms which were the support of Washington's republic, create one of the great graneries of the world and open exhaustless reservoirs of national wealth.

GROWTH OF INDUSTRIES AND POPULATION.

The infant industries which the first act of our first administration sought to encourage, now give remunerative employment to more people than inhabited the Republic at the beginning of Washington's Presidency. The grand total of their annual output of \$7,000,000,000 in value places the United States first among the manufacturing countries of the earth. One half the total mileage of all the railroads and one quarter of all the telegraph lines of the world within our borders, testify to the volume, variety and value of an internal commerce which makes these States, if need be, independent and self-supporting. These hundred years of development under favoring political conditions have brought the sum of our national wealth to a figure which has passed the results of a thousand years for the mother-land, herself otherwise the richest of modern empires.

During this generation a civil war of unequalled magnitude caused the expenditure and loss of \$8,000,000,000 and killed 600,000 and permanently disabled over 1,000,000 young men, and yet the impetuous progress of the

North and the marvellous industrial development of the new and free South have obliterated the evidences of destruction, and made the war a memory, and have stimulated production until our annual surplus nearly equals that of England, France, and Germany combined.

The teeming millions of Asia till the patient soil and work the shuttle and loom as their fathers have done for ages. Modern Europe has felt the influence and received the benefit of the incalculable multiplication of force by inventive genius since the Napoleonic wars, and yet only 269 years after the little band of Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock our people, numbering less than one-fifteenth of the inhabitants of the globe, do one-third of its mining, one-fourth of its manufacturing, one-fifth of its agriculture, and own one-sixth of its wealth.

DANGER AVERTED.

This realism of material prosperity, surpassing the wildest creations of the romancers who have astonished and delighted mankind, would be full of danger for the present and menace for the future if the virtue, intelligence and in-

dependence of the people were not equal to the wise regulation of its uses and the stern prevention of its abuses. But following the growth and power of the great factors, whose aggregation of capital made possible the tremendous pace of the settlement of our national domain, the building of our great cities and the opening of the lines of communication which have unified our country and created our resources, have come national and State legislation and supervision.

Twenty millions, a vast majority of our people of intelligent age, acknowledging the authority of their several churches, 12,000,000 children in the common schools, 345 universities and colleges for the higher education of men and 200 for women, 450 institutions of learning for science, law, medicine, and theology, are the despair of the scoffer and the demagogue and the firm support of civilization and liberty.

Steam and electricity have changed the commerce not only, they have revolutionized also the governments of the world. They have given to the press its power and brought all races and nationalities into touch and sympathy. They have tested and are trying the strength of all systems to stand the strain and conform to

the conditions which follow the germinating influences of American democracy. At the time of the inauguration of Washington seven royal families ruled as many kingdoms in Italy, but six of them have seen their thrones overturned and their countries disappear from the map of Europe.

Most of the kings, princes, dukes, and margraves of Germany who reigned despotically and sold their soldiers for foreign service have passed into history, and their heirs have neither prerogatives nor domain. Spain has gone through many violent changes, and the permanency of her present government seems to depend upon the feeble life of an infant prince. France, our ancient friend, with repeated and bloody revolutions, has tried the government of Bourbon and convention, of directory and consulate, of empire and citizen king, of hereditary sovereign and republic, of empire, and again republic. The Hapsburg and the Hohenzollern, after convulsions which have rocked the foundations of their thrones, have been compelled to concede constitutions to their people and to divide with them the arbitrary power wielded so autocratically and bril-

liantly by Maria Theresa and Frederick the Great.

The royal will of George III. could crowd the American Colonies into rebellion and wage war upon them until they were lost to his kingdom, but the authority of the Crown has devolved upon Ministers who hold office subject to the approval of the representatives of the people, and the equal powers of the House of Lords have become vested in the Commons, leaving to the Peers only the shadow of their ancient privileges.

FEW CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT.

But to-day the American people, after all the dazzling developments of the century, are still happily living under the government of Washington. The Constitution during all that period has been amended only upon the lines laid down in the original instrument, and in conformity with the recorded opinions of the fathers. The first great addition was the incorporation of a bill of rights, and the last the imbedding into the Constitution of the immortal principle of the Declaration of Independence—of the equality of all men before the

law. No crisis has been too perilous for its powers, no evolution too rapid for its adaptation, and no expansion beyond its easy grasp and administration. It has assimilated diverse nationalities with warring traditions, customs, conditions, and languages, imbued them with its spirit, and won their passionate loyalty and love.

The flower of the youth of the nations of continental Europe are conscripted from productive industries and drilling in camps. Vast armies stand in battle array along the frontiers, and a Kaiser's whim or a Minister's mistake may precipitate the most destructive war of modern times. Both monarchical and republican governments are seeking safety in the repression and suppression of opposition and criticism. The volcanic forces of democratic aspiration and socialistic revolt are rapidly increasing, and threaten peace and security. We turn from these gathering storms to the British isles and find their people in the throes of a political crisis involving the form and substance of their government, and their statesmen far from confident that the enfranchised and unprepared masses will wisely use their power.

THE SUN OF OUR DESTINY STILL RISING.

But for us no army exhausts our resources or consumes our youth. Our navy must needs increase in order that the protecting flag may follow the expanding commerce, which is to successfully compete in all the markets of the world. The sun of our destiny is still rising, and its rays illumine vast territories as yet unoccupied and undeveloped, and which are to be the happy homes of millions of people. The questions which affect the powers of government and the expansion or limitation of the authority of the federal Constitution are so completely settled and so unanimously approved that our political divisions produce only the healthy antagonism of parties which is necessary for the preservation of liberty. Our institutions furnish the full equipment of shield and spear for the battles of freedom, and absolute protection against every danger which threatens the welfare of the people will always be found in the intelligence which appreciates their value, and the courage and morality with which their powers are exercised. The spirit of Washington fills the executive office. Presi-

dents may not rise to the full measure of his greatness, but they must not fall below his standard of public duty and obligation. His life and character, conscientiously studied and thoroughly understood by coming generations, will be for them a liberal education for private life and public station, for citizenship and patriotism, for love and devotion to union and liberty. With their inspiring past and splendid present, the people of these United States, heirs of a hundred years, marvellously rich in all which adds to the glory and greatness of a nation, with an abiding trust in the stability and elasticity of their Constitution, and an abounding faith in themselves, hail the coming century with hope and joy.

As Mr. Depew uttered the last word he bowed gracefully to the great and loudly cheering audience and turned toward his seat. Ere he could reach it Senator Evarts seized his hand, and other friends joined in hearty congratulations.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS PRESENT.

PROMINENT MEN WHO OCCUPIED THE RESERVED SEATS ON THE PLATFORM.

The distinguished guests who occupied the reserved seats were as follows :

President Harrison,
Vice-President Morton,
Archbishop Corrigan,
Dr. R. S. Storrs,
Clarence W. Bowen,
Stuyvesant Fish,
Elbridge T. Gerry,
Ex-President Hayes,
Ex-President Cleveland,
Lieut.-Governor Jones,
William Stevens Perry, Bishop of Iowa.
Dr. Eliphalet Potter,
Rev. W. A. Holbrook,
Senator Evarts,
Hamilton Fish,
Mayor Grant,

Members of the Supreme Court, save
Judge Harlan.

Members of the Cabinet, save Secretary
Blaine.

Senator Sherman,
General Sherman,
Ex-Secretary Bayard,
Ex-Vice-President Hamlin,
Senator Hiscock.
Governor D. B. Hill,
Admiral Porter,
Admiral Jouett,

The following Governors of State also had
seats of honor :

William R. Merriam, Minnesota.
Sylvester Pennoyer, Oregon.
Miles C. Moore, Washington Territory.
W. B. Webb, District of Columbia.
John A. Cooper, Colorado.
Russell B. Harrison, special commissioner
for S. T. Bauser of Montana.
Walker, West Virginia.
John M. Thayer, Nebraska.
C. C. Luce, Michigan.
David H. Francis, Missouri.
William P. Dillingham, Vermont.

Simon B. Buckner, Kentucky.
E. E. Jackson, Maryland.
John P. Richmond, South Carolina.
B. T. Biggs, Delaware.
James A. Beaver, Pennsylvania.
Morgan G. Bulkeley, Connecticut.
Oliver Ames, Massachusetts.
Daniel Gould Fowle, North Carolina.
Royal C. Taft, Rhode Island.
Thomas Seay, Alabama.
Edwin C. Burleigh, Maine.
William Larrabee, Iowa.
William D. Hoard, Wisconsin.
J. B. Foraker, Ohio.
Alvin P. Hovey, Indiana.
C. H. Sawyer, New Hampshire.
Fitzhugh Lee, Virginia.
Robert S. Green, New Jersey.
John B. Gordon, Georgia.

Among other noted people observed on the platform, were the following :

Henry Dudley,
William A. Pierrepont,
J. J. O'Donohue,
Edwards Pierrepont,
Andrew Carnegie,

John Cochrane,
John D. Crimmins,
Major Edgar Sigismund Lasar.
James E. Potter,
Senator Haines, of Delaware,
J. C. Carter,
Ex-Collector E. A. Merritt,
Ex-Speaker Lewis Barker, of Maine,
O. P. Potter,
Whitelaw Reid,
J. L. N. Hunt,
Ed. N. Tailer,
Ed. N. Parris,
A. C. Rand,
Alexander Sullivan, of Chicago,
Colonel William Thompson, of Chicago,
John E. Gibbens,
John B. Pyne,
J. P. G. Foster,
A. C. Bernheim,
Mahlon Chance,
Robert B. Porter,
H. S. Marlor,
Senator Hawley,
Carl Schurz,
Anthony Higgins,
Ex-Superintendent Walling,

Judge Benedict,
George Wilson,
Senator Cullom, of Illinois,
Henry C. Bowen,
D. O. Mills,
Bishop Andrews, of the M. E. Church,
President Eliot, of Harvard College,
A. M. Scriba,
General Isaac S. Catlin, of Brooklyn,
G. C. Webb.
Colonel Strange of North Carolina,
A. F. Telfair,
General J. D. Glenn,
Colonel F. A. Olds,
Colonel W. H. Williams,
Colonel C. S. Bryan,
Captain R. Percy Gray,
Captain W. B. Grimes,
Col. Franklin Fairbanks.
General P. P. Pitkin,
General L. G. Kingsley,
Colonel H. J. Brookes,
John Jacob Astor,
Fred Douglass,
Colonel Bourke Cockran,
General John Watts Kearny,
General R. W. Spencer,

Colonel Rufus King,
Colonel G. B. M. Harvey,
Gen. Robert F. Stockton,
Courtlandt Parker,
Chancellor McGill,
Dr. William Pancoast,
Rev. James Corrigan,
Father McDonald,
Senator Allison,
Minister Carter of Hawaii,
Minister Varas of Chili,
Charles Emory Smith,
Ex-Senator M. E. Chandler,
Walker Blaine,
Congressman Chas. O'Neil.

The following gentlemen had official charge of the exercises at the platform:

Hamilton Fish, president ; Hugh J. Grant, chairman ; Elbridge T. Gerry, chairman Executive Committee ; Clarence W. Bowen, Secretary. Platform Committee—Johnston Livingston de Peyster, Chairman ; Robert R. Livingston, W. E. D. Stokes, G. Creighton Webb, Nicholas Fish, Lispenard Stewart, William Pierson Hamilton, Charles H. Russell, Jr., Alfred R. Conkling, William Cary Sanger,

John Anthon, Gardiner Sherman, J. Lawrence Aspinwall, Arthur De Windt, Lewis H. Livingston, Charles W. Bleecker, Thomas Jefferson Coolridge, Jr., Brooks Adams, Clermont L. Clarkson; Frank S. Witherbee, Secretary.

THE VOW OF WASHINGTON.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

The sword was sheathed: in April's sun
Lay green the fields by Freedom won;
And severed sections, weary of debates,
Joined hands at last and were United States.

O City sitting by the Sea!
How proud the day that dawned on thee,
When the new era, long desired, began,
And in its need the hour had found the man!

One thought the cannon salvos spoke;
The resonant bell-tower's vibrant stroke,
The voiceful streets, the plaudit-echoing halls,
And prayer and hymn born heavenward from St.
Paul's!

How felt the land in every part
The strong throb of a nation's heart,
As its great leader gave with reverent awe
His pledge to Union, Liberty, and Law!

That pledge the heavens above him heard,
That vow the sleep of centuries stirred;
In world-wide wonder listening peoples bent
Their gaze on Freedom's great experiment.

Could it succeed? Of honor sold
And hopes deceived all history told.
Above the wrecks that strewed the mournful past,
Was the long dream of ages true at last?

Thank God! the people's choice was just,
The one man equal to his trust,
Wise beyond lore, and without weakness good,
Calm in the strength of flawless rectitude!

His rule of justice, order, peace,
Made possible the world's release;
Taught prince and serf that power is but a trust,
And rule, alone, which serves the ruled, is just;

That Freedom generous is, but strong
In hate of fraud and selfish wrong,
Pretence that turns her holy truths to lies,
And lawless license masking in her guise.

Land of his love! with one glad voice
Let thy great sisterhood rejoice;
A century's suns o'er thee have risen and set,
And, God be praised, we are one nation yet.

And still, we trust, the years to be
Shall prove his hope was destiny,
Leaving our flag with all its added stars
Unrent by faction and unstained by wars!

Lo! where with patient toil he nursed
And trained the new-set plant at first,
The widening branches of a stately tree
Stretch from the sunrise to the sunset sea.

And in its broad and sheltering shade,
Sitting with none to make afraid,
Were we now silent, through each mighty limb,
The winds of heaven would sing the praise of him.

Our first and best!—his ashes lie
Beneath his own Virginian sky.
Forgive, forget, O true and just and brave,
The storm that swept above thy sacred grave!

For, ever in the awful strife
And dark hours of the nation's life,
Through the fierce tumult pierced his warning word,
Their father's voice his erring children heard!

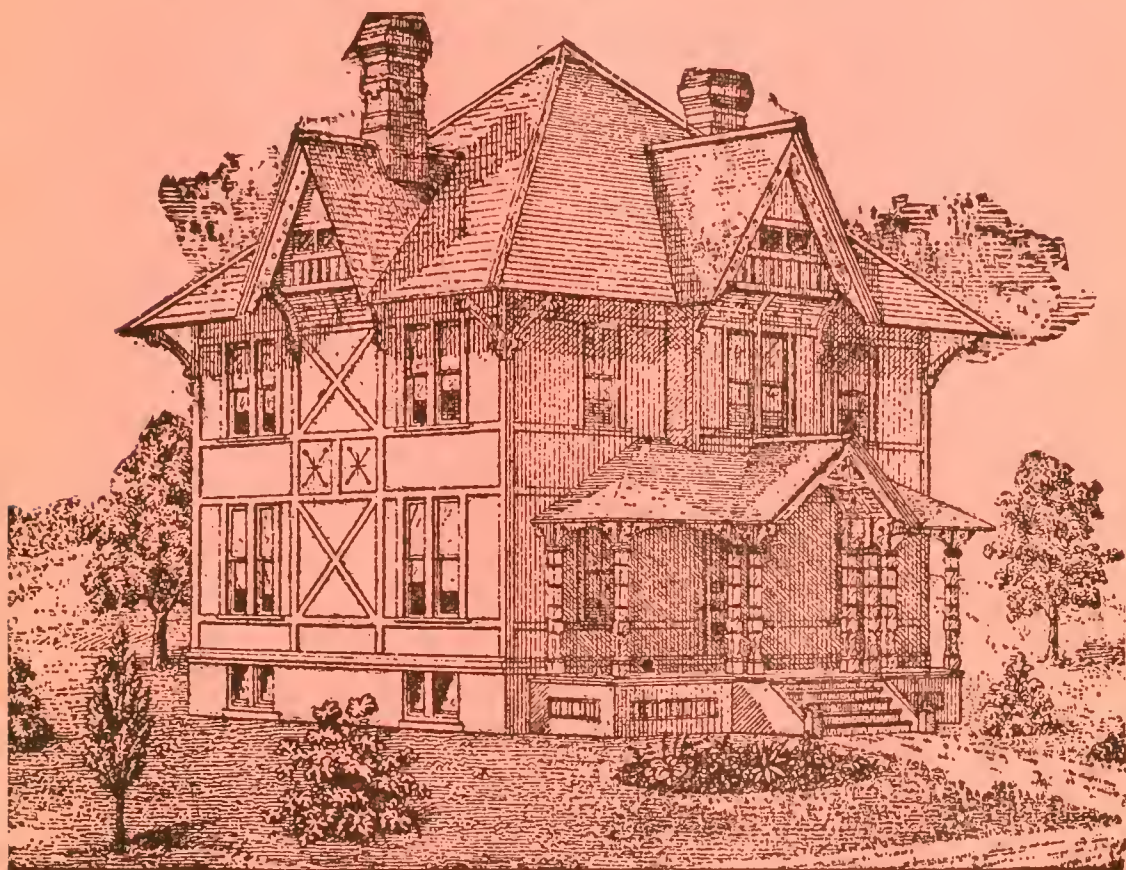
The change for which he prayed and sought
In that sharp agony was wrought;
No partial interest draws its alien line
'Twixt North and South, the cypress and the pine!

One people now, all doubt beyond,
His name shall be our Union bond;
We lift our hands to Heaven, and here and now,
Take on our lips the old centennial vow.

For rule and trust must needs be ours;
Chooser and chosen both are powers
Equal in service as in rights; the claim
Of Duty rests on each and all the same.

Then let the sovereign millions, where
Our banner floats in sun and air,
From the warm palm-lands to Alaska's cold,
Repeat with us the pledge a century old!

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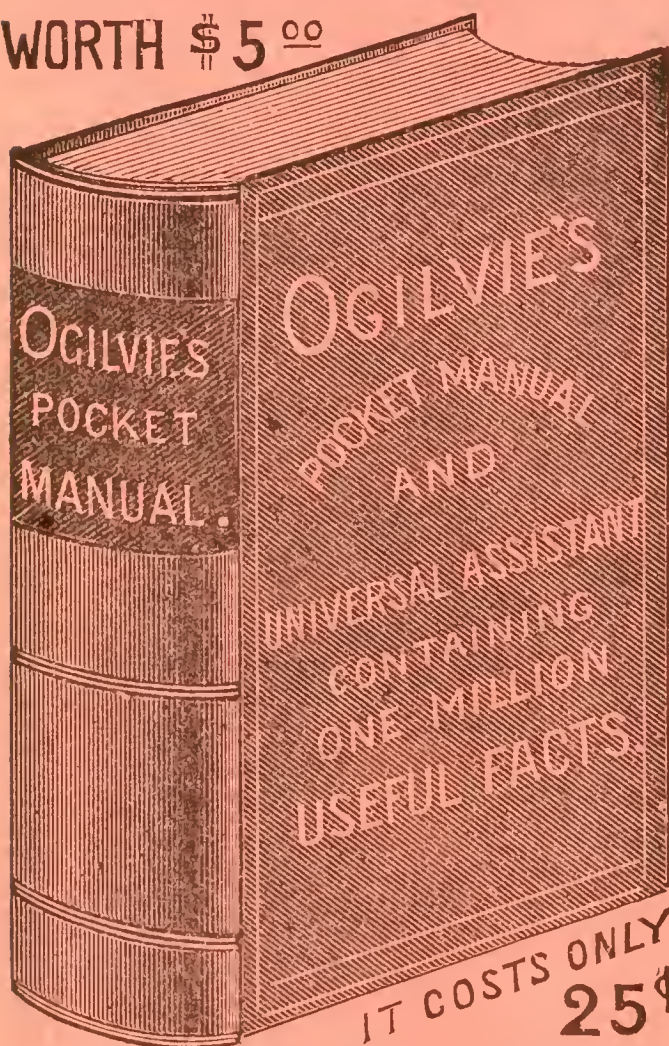
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